Q4 2012 Supplemental Answers

Nebraska Broadband Planning

Quarterly Report – Oct 2012 through Dec 2012

1. **If the project received funding for broadband planning, please describe progress made against all goals, objectives, and milestones detailed in the approved project plan. Be sure to include a description of each major activity/milestone that you plan to complete and your current status. (Answer below.)**

The Nebraska Information Technology Commission Community Council (NITC), University of Nebraska - Lincoln (UNL), Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) and the AIM Institute are cooperatively leading the effort to address the broadband planning needs of Nebraska's communities. UNL is the fiscal agent for the planning part of the grant.

A number of activities were identified in the initial grant to identify barriers to the adoption of broadband and IT services, creating and facilitating local technology planning teams, and collaborating with broadband service providers to encourage broadband deployment and use. In the supplemental grant, activities were focused around three projects: capacity building, technical assistance and local planning. Following the NITA guidance and recent Webinar recommendation, the quarterly report will focus on the three project areas. For each section area, there is an overall summary of the project and then a quarterly update of the particular area.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Internet Connectivity and Use in Nebraska: A Household Survey – initial and follow-up.

Nebraskans were surveyed about their computer and Internet usage, challenges and desires for the future through a survey conducted by UNL. The survey, mailed in February 2010, to 6,600 Nebraskans achieved a 47% response rate. The report, available at broadband.nebraska.gov, highlights regional, education, income, age, gender, racial and ethnic group comparisons.

A follow-up survey of households will be conducted in 2014 (Year 5 of grant) to document changes in Internet and broadband use since the initial survey. Regions that were originally identified as either unserved or underserved in the initial survey will be over-sampled in this follow-up survey.

> *4th Quarter 2012 Status Update.* Initial survey is available at broadband.nebraska.gov. In Quarter 4 began reviewing survey and begin planning for survey in 2014. Benchmarks are being identified for the plans.

Business Survey

Businesses will be surveyed through the Department of Economic Development's Business Retention and Expansion program to identify the strengths and challenges they face in utilizing technology. To develop the statewide plan, over 1000 businesses will be included in the database as communities and regions have the capability to gather information from all types of businesses including retail, health care and services. The BR&E survey asks over 10 specific questions related to technology and broadband utilization. Additional questions will be developed that relate specifically to future opportunities. The data will be pulled together and themes will be developed.

4th Quarter 2012 Status Update. Survey instrument is completed. Exploring ways to increase interest in businesses completing the broadband survey. During Q1, efforts will be refocused including focusing on 10-15 businesses as case studies to show how results of the survey can be used to strengthen business opportunities.

Inventory of Broadband and Digital Literacy Programs. In order to identify potential partners and to avoid duplication of efforts, an inventory of broadband and digital literacy programs will be conducted. Results will be shared with project partners, regional teams and be available on the broadband portal.

4th Quarter 2012 Status Update. Continue to update information located on Web site. Continue to explore opportunities to expand inventory.

Focused Surveys. Focused surveys in regions where there are large numbers of non-adopters will help to better understand how to increase broadband adoption. The surveys will be conducted in specific counties, regions and in some parts of metropolitan areas where usage appears to be lower and will provide these areas with data specific to them that can be used to develop a plan that addresses their future needs. The surveys will also create local benchmark data that will help determine if broadband adoption increases in these areas over time.

4th Quarter 2012 Status Update. In Q4 the North Central Regional Planning team determined not to conduct an in-depth survey at this time. We will continue to explore potential focused surveys that will strengthen the broadband plan. For example, a survey may be conducted with the tribes.

Government and Economic Developer Survey. To gather information on access, adoption, usage, and technical assistance needs of all county and community governments, chambers of commerce, and for economic developers, a survey (web-based where feasible) of all entities will be conducted. This information will support the development of regional and community technology plans and will be used to develop targeted technical assistance for local governments and economic developers.

4th Quarter 2012 Status Update. Surveys were conducted with the Nebraska Economic Development Association, Nebraska Association of County Officials, and the League of Nebraska Municipalities during Q2 2012. Presentations and conversations were started in Q3 and Q4. Conversations will continue with organizations in Q1 to see if there is interest in establishing goals around broadband. Planning team is reviewing survey results to identify potential benchmarks for regions and potential best practices. During Q4 the full reports were written and are available at broadband.nebraska.gov.

Creating Broadband Plan/Administrative – To meet the objectives of grant, the broadband planning oversight team meets on a bi-monthly basis and quarterly with PSC commissioners.

4th Quarter 2012 Status Update: - Promotional materials created for county fair boards, local gatherings, meetings, and events were shared throughout the quarter with extension and fair boards. Public Service Announcements were developed for the PSC to increase awareness and usage of Nebraska Broadband Map functions to be released in November 2012. As a result, more people used the mapping feature and are documented in the mapping report. Continue to develop materials to announce webinars and other videos. An effort around mapping will occur in Q2 after the April mapping update.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Three cross-training efforts were identified in the Supplemental Application to address broadband adoption and utilization. These efforts outlined below are the Statewide Conference, Regional Workshops and Webinars.

Statewide Conference. The statewide conference will be focused on broadband adoption and utilization will bring together many industries including those working in economic development, telecommunications industry, education, state government, and local government personnel.

> *4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: Status. The highlight of Q4 was the second annual Broadband Connecting Nebraska Conference, held October 2nd, 2012 at the Cornhusker Conference Center in Lincoln. Nearly 300 people attended the conference, including more than 100 high school students who heard a thought-provoking keynote by Vint Cerf, Google Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist. Presentations were given on the Nebraska Broadband Mapping Project, emerging consumer electronics, and measuring return on investment for broadband projects. Several panels presented success stories in broadband adoption across sectors from business to health care to agriculture and more. Exhibitors representing broadband service providers, project partners and representatives from other state broadband initiatives greeted participants during breaks in the program.

> The date and location for the 2013 conference (Oct. 16-17 in Kearney, NE) have been finalized, and planning is underway. The final 8 broadband videos to be produced by AIM are complete and awaiting posting to the broadband portal. No significant challenges or obstacles were encountered during Q4.

> Major activities for Q1 2013 include meeting with an expanded planning team, including local leaders, for the 2013 conference in Kearney; development of the program and recruitment of speakers for the conference.

Regional Workshops. Regional workshops will be held to address specific issues related to an area on broadband adoption and utilization.

> *4th Quarter 2012 Status Update:* The Northeast regional workshop was postponed until late Spring 2013. North Central and Southwest are considering regional workshops in late Spring as well. All groups will determine when (and if) they will hold a regional workshop during Q1.

Webinars. Up to four webinars will be held each year to address broadband adoption and utilization. Topics may include how to set up community planning groups to sharing results of the various data collections, processes and best practices.
> *4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: Webinars began in 4th Quarter 2011 and are averaging 40 participants per session. During Q2 2012 webinars were held every other month. Status: Webinar series that started in November focused on, "Don't Know...What I Don't Know." The three part series will feature cloud computing, security concerns and utilizing mobile. The overall format has been modified to highlight video examples of the topic followed by reactions. Don Gray and Gene Hand shared reactions in the December webinar introducing the series. In Q1 2013 will determine additional webinar information. Summary sheets around the webinars will be developed as a request of a regional group.

Best Practice Videos. One way to expand broadband adoption across Nebraska is to learn from communities, businesses and other organizations who are the early adopters and "get it." This project initiative will identify at least 20 examples of best practices throughout Nebraska and conduct video

interviews with key players. These individuals will be asked to describe the essential elements of their success.

>*4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: Status: One additional business best practice webinar, Fred Lockwood and Company CPA, was launched in December. The CPA firm has recognized a positive return on investment by using broadband. For example, productivity has increased over the last five years. The final eight AIM Institute videos were produced during Q4 and will be launched beginning in Q1 2013. UNL has identified additional topics for videos.
>
>A youtube channel has been created to host the videos - Http://Youtube.com/broadbandnebraska.

Entrepreneur Acceleration System (EAS).   This project has the potential to be a model for other states as they develop entrepreneurs .The 2011 cohort concluded during Quarter 4 2011 with the 2011 Impact Summit. Forty-six guides/mentors were selected for the 2012 EAS program which started in 1Q 2012. These guides selected 160 companies and 746 managers to work with through the program, impacting almost 5,000 employees in Nebraska. Participating companies attend the four core workshops led by Gallup in Quarter 1 through 3 of 2012. Companies are also provided one on one support from a Gallup trained guide and participate in self-paced activities administered online throughout program.   Results are on broadband.nebraska.gov.

>*4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: Status: Growing small business is the goal of the Gallup EAS program, focused on behavioral economics. Status: 160 companies and 746 managers worked with 45 guides during 2012 pilot program. Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman delivered a keynote address for the close of the 2012 session and recognized efforts were making a difference. Planning is underway to continue the program.

Technical Assistance Expertise. The focus of this effort will be to provide technical assistance in the area of business and entrepreneurism to chambers of commerce, economic developers, and local and county stakeholders statewide and regionally to increase broadband adoption.

>*4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: Small business education around security issues and knowing what was available and what was needed was identified by regional groups and led to webinar focused on security. Identify additional technical assistance opportunities.

Broadband Portal Development - Develop a central broadband portal which will serve as a source of information on broadband efforts in Nebraska and technical assistance materials.

>*4th Quarter 2012 Status Update* Website launched April 2012. Website officially launched in April 2012. In the first quarter, there were 700 unique visitors to the site with 2,228 unique visitors July-September 2012 and 1,621 unique visitors October-December, 2012.   Visitors that did not bounce from page spent an average of 7 minutes at the site. Majority of visitors were seeking conference information and going to the statewide map. Others viewed the videos, webinars, partner, and news sections. Marketing efforts around webinar, conference and mapping increase visits to the portal with over 150 a day when marketing conference to over a 100 visitors when public service announcements launched.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Regional Planning Teams. Regional planning teams will be formed to conduct regional assessments, prioritize opportunities, and develop strategies. Regional coaches will assist planning teams in conducting the development of plans. Each of the regions will hold a regional forum. The forums will be conducted to present broadband mapping and mail survey results, to solicit feedback, and to kick off

regional planning efforts. Project partners will work with regional planning teams to host forums to present broadband mapping data and mail survey results, to solicit feedback, and to kick off regional planning efforts. Over 300 individuals participated in the eight regional forums. Of these 300 individuals, around 80 initially indicated a willingness to serve on the planning teams. Regional coaches have additional planning members who represent a broad area of interest.

4th Quarter 2012 Status Update: The eight extension educators continue to work in their regions. Each of the regions are at varying stages of the planning process and have evolved given their region and interest in the effort. Following the October broadband conference, coaches and planning team members met with Michael Curri and explored how to show the ROI for utilizing broadband. The goal to highlight the priority areas at the broadband conference in October was not achieved; however, the teams are on target and draft plans will be available late Spring to allow for feedback in the regions. Following are highlights from the regional planning teams:

North Central Region – Following the focus groups, began to hold focused conversations with key players regarding the focus group questions. Currently exploring approaches to share information and identify ways in which the communities in North Central can increase broadband speed and availability. This includes identifying best practices with service providers. Exploring holding a workshop or gathering in the Spring. Goal of first draft of plan to be completed by Spring 2013.

Northeast Region - The Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District has integrated broadband adoption and utilization into its Regional Blueprint for Sustainability initiative, a comprehensive planning effort to guide future economic development for approximately 20+ counties. Coordinating with the Northeast NE Economic Development District (NENED) to create a broadband focused, two-day regional community development workshop for community leaders, public officials and citizens in spring 2013.

Focus group with ag producers held and sessions with parents were held around broadband. Topics were identified by the regional planning team.

Western Region – Thirty-two (32) people attended the Western Nebraska Tourism Industry Conference held in Gering. Participants learned about increasing your business online presence "Curb Appeal". Participants can learn about the elements of So-Lo-Mo as well as Website Critique, Going Mobile, QR Codes, and Updating Site Maps on Google, Mapquest, and Bing.

Focus groups were postponed until Q1 2013. Three-four focus groups will be conducted to inform the western region plan. Expand and define more fully, the Western Region Broadband plan. Continue to plan around the main focus previously identified as expanding education of broadband use and new technologies, education and retention of youth, expansion of broadband services/technology by area businesses.

Southwest Region – Identified a need for small business education around security issues and knowing what was available and what was needed. Currently, we are developing one page summary sheets highlighting 12-24 topics to increase awareness and knowledge of utilizing broadband that can be shared through electric bills. During the quarter spoke with 3 Extension Boards about what we are doing and asked them to conduct the speed test and confirm their providers. In addition, coach is working with local libraries that have expressed interest.

Focus groups are being held during Q1 to gather information, increase awareness and interest.

New Frontier Region – Focus groups were held in four locations which were Ogallala, North Platte, Lexington and Mullen. Media was used to attract attendees and three news articles appeared in the local paper about Broadband and the Focus Groups being held at four locations. We also had a follow-up news release and interview with the local TV station about the objective of the Broadband Initiative and the focus groups. Thirty-two (32) community leaders were involved in the focus group meetings. Participants included hospital administrators, businesses, community college administrators, law enforcement, internet providers, extension educators, church leaders, county commissioners, school administrators, bankers, rest home administrators, economic development coordinators and chamber of commerce leaders.

Some communities in the region have adequate broadband availability and reliability and others do not. If there was not adequate broadband service or reliability (Lexington), the conversation focused around how the community can get the service. The internet service in this particular community was down for several hours a day on a regular basis. This caused some businesses to purchase internet service from 3 or 4 providers. When a community or region had adequate broadband, the participants were more interested in addressing how broadband can be used for economic development or to provide education on how to make full use of their Broadband capabilities.

Another suggestion was if a business could do a self-analysis of technology tasks, what type of bandwidth is needed. Understanding this would strengthen the business and help the community to understand what broadband is needed. "We are never going to be stronger than the 'weakest' link. Is it between the hospital and the broadband pipe and pipe and hub. How do we analyze that?" commented a participant.

Providers in attendance learned through the conversation that they need to provide education and marketing materials to help drive Broadband usage.

The North Platte, Ogallala and Mullen have good access to Broadband but feel they need more education on utilizing broadband. They would like to have educational programs on Broadband use. We are working on video clips for use at these types of programs.

The Mullen extended care facility was identified as a success in broadband utilization. Mullen, located in the Nebraska Sandhills with a population of 509 is the only nursing home within a 75 mile radius. The community is served by a local telecommunications company that has invested in broadband infrastructure. The care facility is utilizing telemedicine for follow-up sessions for patients with their doctors. This saves people from driving over 150 miles one way to meet with their doctor. In addition, the facility purchased geriatric computers that are constantly used to connect family with residents.

The next step will be to take the focus group suggestions and develop a New Frontier Regional Broadband Plan. We will also be working on planning Broadband educational programs to cover the educational needs in the New Frontier Region.

Southeast and Central Region – Presentations were held at local organizational meetings such as rotary, extension board and 4-H council to test speed and to increase interest in project. A challenge has been to maintain an active broadband planning team. There are people interested in various pieces of broadband, but to find people willing to take the time to put it all together into a viable plan is the challenge.

One focus group was conducted in the Central region that brought 9 people throughout the area. Local providers also attended and heard participants share stories that learned that not every community in area has broadband that is reliable for their business. In March, a draft plan will be developed.

Community Planning - North/South Omaha. North and south Omaha were identified as underserved regions/areas through the survey of Nebraska households. The AIM Institute will be leading efforts in Omaha to address broadband adoption and utilization.

> *4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: Efforts are moving forward in North/South Omaha. Key partners are being identified such as the Urban League, South Omaha Neighborhood Association, Omaha Chamber and libraries. Identifying methods and organizations to provide a range of training opportunities to the target population is a goal of this planning effort.

Community Planning - Cultural and Unserved Communities. We will form additional community or local planning teams in regions/areas identified as underserved through the survey of Nebraska households and broadband mapping data. Coaches with specific knowledge of these regional areas will be added to work specifically with these areas to develop plans relevant to their situation regarding broadband adoption and availability.

> *4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: The opening of the radio station has created interest in utilizing broadband to deliver programming and connect with the three NICC campuses – in Macy (Omaha tribe), Santee (Santee & Sioux tribes) and an urban audience in South Sioux City. The college is the primary location where people access the internet and is exploring with broadband planning cultural coach how to utilize technology to further the mission of education, healthy lifestyle and cultural.

Focus Groups. Seven to 10 focus groups will be held with anchor institutions and utility providers as well as populations with low usage rates to gain understanding into the barriers to broadband adoption and utilization from their perspective. Focus groups will also be held with businesses including farmers and ranchers.

> *4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: Status: Four focus groups were held in the New Frontier Planning region and one in the Southeast region. Focus groups in these regions confirmed that broadband access has increased in the area primarily in the health industry and education. Access continues to be a challenge in a number of areas. Where there is access, communities are interested in exploring ways to increase utilization. Where there is limited access or reliability, the conversation has focused on what a community needs to do to increase broadband.

Community Sector Discussions. Community Sector discussions will be held to further advance adoption of technology in specific industries such as business and entrepreneurs, chambers of commerce, agriculture and the health industry**.** The focus of each discussion will be to benchmark technology use across the specific sectors, set goals for improved technology, and develop a plan to achieve goals.

> *4th Quarter 2012 Status Update*: Community sector discussion will begin in the regions. In the Northeast region several focus groups will be held on agriculture. Agriculture and health are two community sector groups that have been identified. Plans are underway to hold a focus group during the Nebraska Ag Technology Association (NEATA) meeting to ask a targeted group of users to vision how they will utilize broadband in the future, explain how they are currently

using broadband in their work and share their ideas on how to educate and expose others to incorporate broadband into their operations. In addition, a workshop on broadband planning efforts will be held at the annual NEATA meeting.

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BROADBAND SUCCESS STORIES

SUCCESS STORIES FOR BUILDING CAPACITY

Efforts to drive individuals to the website have an impact. The Website officially launched in April 2012. In the first quarter, there were 700 unique visitors to the site with 2,228 unique visitors July-September 2012 and 1,621 unique visitors October-December, 2012.   Visitors during the Quarter that did not bounce from page spent an average of 7 minutes at the site. Majority of visitors were seeking conference information and going to the statewide map. Others viewed the vidoes, webinars, partner, and news sections. Marketing efforts for the webinar, conference and mapping increased visits to the portal. For example, over 150 visited the first part of October seeking information on conference and there were over 100 visits a day when the public service announcements to test speed were launched.

SUCCESS STORIES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Fred Lockwood and Company is an example of a business that has successfully applied broadband services into their offices.   The western Nebraska CPA firm has three locations and several employees work from their home. The flexibility to work from home has created happier employees and broadband has been essential for the three site locations to communicate.

There is cost in moving to broadband but the benefits are worth it. The company saw the benefit when comparing productive works hours over the last 5 years. They see more productive work hours today than five years ago.

Encourage to check out other success stories utilizing broadband at broadband.nebraska.gov.

SUCCESS STORIES FOR REGIONAL PLANNING

Focus groups have been effective at increasing interest and conversation around broadband. Providers who have attended recognized the importance of providing educational programs on broadband use. Planning team recognized that providers are beginning to communicate more amongst each other.

A success story using broadband in the New Frontier Region -

The Mullen extended care facility was identified as a success in broadband utilization. Mullen, located in the Nebraska Sandhills with a population of 509 is the only nursing home within a 75 mile radius. The community is served by a local telecommunications company that has invested in broadband infrastructure. The care facility is utilizing telemedicine for follow-up sessions for patients with their doctors. This saves people from driving over 150 miles one way to meet with their doctor. In addition, the facility purchased geriatric computers that are constantly used to connect family with residents.